

Minutes
Board of Trustees Meeting
Chippokes Plantation Farm Foundation
Wednesday, March 4, 2009
10:00 a.m.
Stoner Building
Chippokes Farm & Forestry Museum
Chippokes Plantation State Park
Surry, Virginia

Present:

Mr. E. C. Michael Abley
Delegate William K. Barlow
Mrs. Nancy Smith Bradshaw
Ms. Shirley Davis
Mr. E. Henry Doggett, III
Mr. Joe Elton

Mr. Tyrone Franklin
Mrs. Judy S. Lyttle
Mr. Alan V. Monette
Mrs. Linda D. Morse
Senator Frederick M. Quayle

Absent:

Senator Harry B. Blevins
Mr. Todd Haymore
Mr. Joseph H. Maroon

Dr. Craig L. Nessler
Delegate Edward T. Scott
Mr. Robert Soble

Foundation Staff:

Mrs. Carol B. Bowman
Mr. Jim W. Burden
Mr. Brian C. Frye

Mrs. Linda A. Guntharp
Dr. Carla A. Kirts
Mr. Rudy D. Russo

Following a period of social time (visiting and coffee & snacks) the meeting began at 10:00 am. No one was in attendance other than the Chippokes Plantation Board of Trustees Members and Museum Staff. The minutes of the November 12, 2008, Board of Trustees Meeting were previously distributed to all members.

After a brief greeting by Chairman, Senator Frederick M. Quayle, he introduced Linda Guntharp, Executive Director of the Chippokes Plantation Farm Foundation. She extended her best wishes for a "Happy New Year".

Mrs. Guntharp called attention to the items in front of each attendee, including the 2009 Calendar of Events, a small packet containing several items with the Chippokes Farm & Forestry name and a 2009 Flip Page Desk Calendar featuring pictures that were taken around the Museum and Plantation by employee, Rudy Russo. There was also a "mini agenda" and a picture page showing the bands that will be featured during the upcoming Chippokes Steam & Gas Engine Festival.

The Fiscal Year 2009 Mini Financial Report sheet showed the following balances, as of July 1, 2008 thru January 31, 2009: 01 General Fund: \$75,695.32; 09 Contribution Fund: \$390,478.19; Checking Account: \$2,596.13; Endowment Fund: \$22,326.09; for a Total Cash on Hand as of January 31, 2009: \$491,095.73.

Mrs. Guntharp spoke of the many school and homeschool contacts that have been made encouraging classes to make reservations for Standard of Learning (SOL's) presentations at the Museum. Outreach programs are also available.

Much effort is being made to make the Chippokes Farm & Forestry Museum name well known throughout the Surry – Isle of Wight areas. By sponsoring several youth teams, it is hoped word will spread that "Chippokes is here for you!" Samples were passed around of items with the Chippokes name on (a "paw" and mini football) that will be featured at local games.

There was some discussion regarding procurement requirements when purchasing necessary supplies. It is encouraged that we deal with companies who qualify and have registered as SWAM (Small, Woman, and Minority owned Businesses) and/or eVA (Electronic Virginia) vendors. However, sometimes following these guidelines results in paying a higher price for an item that could be purchased elsewhere for less. Reports showing percentages of compliance are required from each agency, with the statewide goal of 40% as its target for combined SWAM participation in state contracting. These compliance percentages are actually included in Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Director, Joseph Maroon's position evaluation.

Mrs. Guntharp spoke of distributing our 2009 Calendar of Events at the new Smithfield Visitor Center. She also made a personal contact with Earl Jones, advertising manager of the Suffolk News Herald.

501C3 Report

Senator Quayle reported that we are on the way with the firm that has been hired by the Foundation to prepare 501C3 papers and represent us to the IRS. Hopefully this process will be completed within the next 30 days.

Steam & Gas Engine Festival Report

There are several changes in the works for this years event, which will be Saturday and Sunday, May 30 and 31. For one, it is now a "Steam & Gas Engine Festival". The stage for the live entertainment that has been scheduled for the entire weekend will be located on the Museum Green. Also an Art Contest, Farmers Market and military equipment will be on the Museum side.

The Tractor Pull, Sawmill operation, Garden Tractor Pull, Merchant Lane, Antique Cars and Food Vendors will continue to be in the Sawmill area as in years past. Mrs. Guntharp said would like to have some activity along the Forestry Trail, such as an Intertribal Native American group doing storytelling along the path.

As we emphasis the fact that our animals (Jack the Donkey and his family of sheep, goats and Tom Turkey) are live-stock and not pets, a contact has been made with a Petting Zoo. Their fee will be \$ 350.00 a day. Mrs. Guntharp said there would be an additional \$ 100.00 a day for pony rides and asked for the opinion of the group. After some discussion, Mrs. Linda Morse suggested that we just have the Petting Zoo this year, and this was agreeable all around.

Mrs. Bradshaw asked if anyone had been approached as sponsors of the Petting Zoo. Mrs. Guntharp indicated the plan is to ask local businesses to sponsor ads in the program that will be handed out to visitors.

Mrs. Guntharp will be meeting tomorrow with the new Chippokes Park Manager, Daniel White, and the District Manager, Fred Hazelwood. They will discuss arrangements for getting staff help from other parks during this last weekend of May event.

Advertising

Mrs. Guntharp and the Museum Staff have been working since January on increasing our advertising for the Museum Educational Programs and the Steam & Gas Engine Festival. Contacts have been made with the Coffee House News and an area Radio Station. The Virginia Association of Museums (VAM) Web site lists Museum events and these are linked to DCR Web site. Just yesterday it was learned that Nancy Heltman had arranged for a Facebook and Twitter page featuring Jack the Donkey. Currently he is being called "Jack the Hero", as we think he rescued Tom Turkey from a night-time bobcat attack. Mrs. Guntharp suggested people have a conversation with Jack on his Facebook page. Brian Frye wrote a piece from the Donkey's point of view.

Museum Report

Mrs. Guntharp is looking at developing a handout that would be Passport Book size. This would feature matching Museum exhibits to pages in the book for different age levels.

Jim Burden spoke of some newly donated items to the collection. Of course some things have to be "politely refused", but excited about the offer of some large forestry equipment from a Department of Forestry site that is being closed. They will deliver the items to the Museum, as soon as a protected area has been arranged. Mr. Burden also mentioned another group of equipment coming from a Glen Allen donor. This includes a belt driven hammer mill that can grind corn meal and a potato digger.

A gentleman in Tyner North Carolina has an assortment of equipment that belonged to his deceased Father, who was a Wheelwright and Blacksmith. He made wagon wheels from scratch. The plan is to set up an active forging exhibit in the sawmill area. Also being offered is a full sized wagon with four new wheels and a mini eight foot wagon that could be pulled by a single horse (or donkey). Arrangements will be made soon to visit this great collection.

Henry Doggett mentioned that Franklin Loggers were going out of business and wondered if we had contacted them. Mr. Burden said we are looking for a log skidder. Alan Monette asked about equipment from Kirk Lumber, but Jim seemed to think everything was gone from that location.

Alan Monette also asked about the status of the equipment stored in the Courtland Quonset Hut. Tom Perry, an auctioneer from Suffolk has looked at some of the items. There was some discussion regarding an auction vs just offering priced items for sale. A big part of the project will be moving the items from Courtland to the Museum, and then would need a place to move them to! Mrs. Guntharp said we currently do have use of a dump truck from York River State Park. There may be a small auction Saturday morning of the Steam & Gas Engine Festival.

Work has continued on the cedar building to be used as Mrs. Guntharp's office. The wood being used on the inside was milled at the park. The heat is currently on in the building and the Board was invited to stop by following the meeting.

Stimulus Package Funds

Mrs. Guntharp said Museums were lumped in with Golf Courses, Zoo's, Swimming Pools, etc. Just last weekend a group from the American Association of Museums (AAM) went to lobby in Washington, DC, with some success. Museums are now in the category of Education, which is where they should be.

Mr. Elton said the Stimulus money is pretty tightly regulated. At this point only the Department of Interior and Agriculture will be receiving funds for Youth Core and Conservation Core. They will actually be putting people to work and paying them for their efforts. Some of this is very unclear. Senator Quayle suggested that the drop structure repair might qualify and Joe Elton said water improvement in the park would also be a good project.

Carla Kirts has a "shovel ready" Forestry Student Internship Program that has been developed as a joint effort with the Park. This was offered to Dabney S. Lancaster Community College students last summer, who are required to do an internship. The problem was we were not able to pay a reasonable stipend.

Mr. Joe Elton (Director of Virginia State Parks) Report

Mr. Elton conveyed Mr. Joe Maroon, Director of Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), regards to the Chippokes Board of Trustees. Mr. Elton also expressed appreciation to Senator Quayle and the Virginia General Assembly for returning to Virginia State Parks .5 M \$ of the 2.2 Million previously cut. This is not a 100% done deal, but hopeful it will stay in the final budget.

Mr. Elton spoke of a recent telephone conference regarding full funding for Federal Land & Water Conservation Fund. This was started with President Johnson in 1964 and since that time Virginia State Parks have received a portion of the funds. Among other things, Grayson Highland State Park was acquired with these monies. The last eight years President Bush has done some cutting, but by 2014, President Obama would restore full funding of 900 Million Dollars annually.

Mr. Elton mentioned Daniel White, new Park Manager, who came from a position at Grayson Highland State Park. They have just had a new baby and recently moved to Chippokes.

Mr. Elton stated that Nancy Heltman, Virginia State Parks Central Office Operations Section Director, is the person to go to for help with technology. An Electronic Newsletter has been developed with highlights each week of what is going on in Virginia State Parks. For anyone interested, enter dcr.virginia.gov and you can sign on. Also if you have an idea for a good story, you can enter it. Only thing is, you have to write the story and supply any pictures that you think appropriate.

Celebration of the Civil War Sesquicentennial (2011 – 2015) will be a state wide effort. Every Virginia State Park has been challenged to determine what part their area played during the Civil War. Mr. Elton continued by saying the parks will then make plans to share this information with the public thru interpretative programs.

The local story is Chippokes property was not damaged during the war, because their famous Peach Brandy was offered to both the Union and the Confederate Armies. Mr. Elton said now that the Foundation has restored the orchard Chippokes can start with Peach Juice. The George Washington Mill used to be part of the State Park System. They now produce George Washington Liquor and sponsor a series of seminars and lectures telling how this product impacted the Commonwealth of Virginia. You can even purchase a small bottle for \$ 45.00.

In mentioning SWAM, Mr. Elton said there is a strong insistence to follow the procurement rules that have been set down by the State. He didn't promise any miracles but the construction exemption that we have will be a big help in the future.

Mr. Elton said when Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) was outsourced to Northrop Grumman, it was supposed to be cost effective. Somehow this has not happened. They recently scheduled a "refresh" of all computers, whether new equipment was needed or not.

Senator Quayle hopes the VITA move will result in use of the same software so everyone can communicate with each other within the State system. Mr. Elton did say if not linked to the State Network, the Foundation could buy their own equipment.

General Discussion

Mike Abley asked if Wireless Broadband was available for the whole of Surry County. Mr. Tyrone Franklin, Surry County Administrator, said a study shows it would cost 1.7 M \$ to cover the entire County. The "shovel ready" plan at this time is to do the work in phases, beginning with the Towns of Surry and Dendron, and then move on to the rest of the County. Mr. Franklin did say it is closer than ever before.

Senator Quayle mentioned that in areas where Wireless is available, he has observed people on Public Library porches using their personal computers.

Alan Monette said "speed" makes the difference in the monthly service fee. Mrs. Guntharp said she considers it a success here at the Museum if one can access and/or send an email. She feels it is necessary to call the intended recipient and tell them an email has been sent, just to be sure it is received.

Mike Abley said he knows a local beekeeper who would like to place hives in the vicinity of our restored peach and apple orchard. He will pass on the information to the Museum. Area Extension Services are having beekeeping classes. Mr. Abley is also interested in adopting a row in our Community Garden as mentioned in the 2009 Calendar of Events. Jim Burden said they have done some preliminary work but it is a little too early to plant. Whoever adopts a row will be able to keep the produce and the weeds!

There was some conversation about a call-in radio show possibility that could feature the Steam & Gas Engine Festival. Alan Monette asked if we still work with John Soderberg. Mrs. Guntharp responded that she and Jim had a session with John previous to the first of two volunteer planning meetings that John chaired. The next meeting will be March 28 at 9:30 am.

Mrs. Guntharp suggested that we ask people to register for SWAM. Alan Monette observed that it was difficult to get SWAM certification. Mr. Elton said Nancy Heltman is the person to contact if we need help with eVA and/or SWAM information.

There being no further business, Senator Quayle declared the meeting adjourned.

Birthday Party

However, there was one final bit of business. Mrs. Guntharp shared that as we had several birthdays around this time of the year, we should sing "Happy Birthday" and have some cake...which we did!!!

The Birthday People are:

February 16	Senator Fred Quayle, Chippokes Board of Trustees Chairman
March 3	Rudy Russo, Chippokes Farm & Forestry Museum Staff
March 8	Linda Guntharp, Chippokes Foundation Executive Director
March 10	Henry Doggett, Chippokes Board of Trustees Member
March 13	Delegate William Barlow, Chippokes Board of Trustees Member

NOTE: Hope I got these dates correct. If not (or if there were others that should have been included) please let me know.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol B. Bowman
Administrative Assistant
Chippokes Plantation Farm Foundation

Attachments:

1. Financial Statement FY 2009 – July 1, 2008 - January 31, 2009 (available from DCR)